

Cool Season Vegetables

Jeff Cook – Crawford County Extension Service

Well summer is just about over and the summer vegetable garden is probably full of weeds. Now is the time of year to start planting some of our cool season crops. There are several types of vegetable crops that can be planted and harvested in the cooler months. Beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, collards, lettuce, mustard, onions, radishes, spinach, and turnips can all be planted at this time of year. Most of these are easily started from seed, but transplants are usually available at local lawn and garden stores as well as some of the bigger retail chains.

Plant spacing is critical to allow for proper growth and development of vegetables. Crowding can lead to reduced size while sparsely planted gardens can result in wasted lime, fertilizer and water. The recommended row spacing for most of our cool season crops is around 2 – 3 feet. This can be reduced for crops like carrots, onions, mustard, and turnips. The in-row spacing of vegetables is also important. For most of these crops about a foot in between each plant will be adequate, however onions, turnips, carrots, and mustard can be planted much closer.

Fertilization for these crops will also vary. A soil sample should always be done to assure proper pH and determine available nutrients. Different vegetables require differing levels of fertility to produce a quality crop. Broccoli, cabbage, lettuce and onions are referred to as heavy feeders, meaning they require a lot of fertilizer. Greens, radish and beets are medium feeders. A general recommendation for medium feeders on marginal soil would be 20 pounds of 16-4-8 per 1000 square feet. For heavy feeders this amount would need to be increased by 50%. For crops like broccoli and root crops 1 tablespoon of borax should be applied per 100 feet of row. This can be done by mixing the borax with soil or another fertilizer and applying it down the row.

For more information about fall vegetable gardening stop by our office or give us a call at 836-3121. We have plenty of information that will help you have a successful fall harvest.